

Appn. No. 09/234,695  
Amendment dated December 13, 2004  
Reply to Office Action mailed July 12, 2004

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims** (deleted text being struck through and added text being underlined):

1. through 16. (Cancelled)

1        17. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for  
2 processing signals related to trading shifts between employees, the method  
3 comprising:

4        accepting by a computer system a conditional offer, by a first  
5 employee assigned to work a first shift, to trade the first shift for another  
6 shift of another employee;

7        displaying by the computer system to other employees the conditional  
8 offer to trade the first shift for another shift;

9        receiving by the computer system a conditional acceptance from a  
10 second employee to trade a second shift of the second employee for the  
11 offered first shift of the first employee; and

12       confirming by the computer system a trade of the first shift of the first  
13 employee for the second shift of the second employee upon verification of  
14 criteria, or rejecting the trade of the first shift for the second shift upon  
15 non-verification of the criteria;

16       wherein the step of confirming includes checking by the computer  
17 system training data associated with the second employee in a training data  
18 database, and comparing the training data associated with the second  
19 employee with training requirements associated with a work area function to  
20 be performed on the first shift to verify that the second employee is  
21 qualified to perform the work area functions associated with the first shift;

22       wherein the step of confirming includes checking by the computer  
23 system a length of time between a time of receipt of the conditional  
24 acceptance and a time of occurrence of the first shift and the second shift

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25 against a predetermined minimum time period for trading shifts to verify  
26 that the length of time is not less than the predetermined minimum time  
27 period, providing a management user of the computer system with the  
28 capability to change the predetermined minimum time period;

29        additionally including displaying by the computer system to the  
30 second employee, upon confirmation of the trade, notifications relevant to  
31 the work area function of the first shift and the training data associated with  
32 the second employee;

33        additionally including indicating by the computer system to the first  
34 employee, upon confirmation of the trade, the confirmation of the trade; and

35        additionally including restricting by the computer system access to  
36 information about the trade of the first shift for the second shift upon  
37 confirmation of the trade.

1        18. (Currently Amended) A computer-implanted implemented method  
2 for processing signals related to trading shifts between employees, the  
3 method comprising:

4        establishing a preliminary schedule of shifts on a computer system;

5        verifying by the computer system an identity of a first employee;

6        presenting to the first employee by the computer system the  
7 preliminary schedule schedule of shifts;

8        accepting by the computer system a conditional offer from the first  
9 employee, assigned to work a first shift, to trade the first shift of another  
10 shift on the preliminary schedule of another employee;

11       displaying to other employees the conditional offer to trade the first  
12 shift of another shift;

13       verifying by the computer system an identity of a second employee;

14       receiving a conditional acceptance by the computer system from the  
15 second employee to trade a second shift of the second employee for the  
16 offered first shift of the first employee; and

17       confirming a trade of the first shift of the first employee for the

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18 second shift of the second employee upon verification of criteria, or  
19 rejecting the trade of the first shift for the second shift upon non-  
20 verification of the criteria, the step of confirming including:

21        checking training data associated with the second employee in a  
22 training data database;

23        comparing by the computer system the training data associated  
24 with the second employee with training requirements associated with a  
25 work area function to be performed on the first shift to verify that the  
26 second employee is qualified to perform the work area functions  
27 associated with the first shift;

28        checking by the computer system a length of time between a time  
29 of receipt of the conditional acceptance and a time of occurrence of the  
30 first shift and the second shift against a predetermined minimum time  
31 period for trading shifts to verify that the length of time is not less  
32 than the minimum time period, providing a management user of the  
33 computer system with the capability to change the predetermined  
34 minimum time period;

35        transferring by the computer system, upon confirmation of the trade,  
36 the first shift from the first employee to the second employee and  
37 transferring the second shift from the second employee to the first  
38 employee;

39        displaying by the computer system to the second employee, upon  
40 confirmation of the trade, notifications relevant to the work area function of  
41 the first shift and the training data associated with the second employee;

42        indicating by the computer system to the first employee, upon  
43 confirmation of the trade, the confirmation of the trade; and

44        restricting by the computer system access to information about the  
45 trade of the first shift for the second shift upon ~~confirmation~~ confirmation  
46 of the trade.

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1        19. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for  
2 processing signals related to trading shifts between employees, the method  
3 comprising:

4            establishing a preliminary schedule of shifts on a computer system;  
5            presenting to the first employee by the computer system the  
6 preliminary schedule of shifts;

7            accepting by the computer system a conditional offer from a first  
8 employee, assigned to work a first shift, to trade the first shift for another  
9 shift on the preliminary schedule of another employee;

10          displaying to other employees the conditional offer to trade the first  
11 shift for another shift;

12          receiving a conditional acceptance by the computer system from a  
13 second employee to trade a second shift of the second employee for the  
14 offered first shift of the first employee; and

15          confirming a trade of the first shift of the first employee for the  
16 second shift of the second employee upon verification of criteria, or  
17 rejecting the trade of the first shift for the second shift upon non-  
18 verification of the criteria; and

19          transferring by the computer system, upon confirmation of the trade,  
20 the first shift from the first employee to the second employee and  
21 transferring the second shift from the second employee to the first  
22 employee[[[;]]] .

1        20. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim  
2 19 further comprising verifying by the computer system an identity of a first  
3 employee and verifying by the computer system an identity of a second  
4 employee.

1        21. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim  
2 19 wherein the step of confirming includes checking training data associated  
3 with the second employee in a training data database.

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1        22. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim  
2 19 wherein the step of confirming includes comparing by the computer  
3 system the training data associated with the second employee with training  
4 requirements associated with a work area function to be performed on the  
5 first shift to verify that the second employee is qualified to perform the  
6 work area functions associated with the first shift.

1        23. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim  
2 19 wherein the step of confirming includes checking by the computer system  
3 a length of time between a time of receipt of the conditional acceptance and  
4 a time of ~~eeurance~~ occurrence of the first shift and the second shift against  
5 a predetermined minimum time period for trading shifts to verify that a  
6 length of time is not less than the minimum time period, providing a  
7 management user of the computer system with the capability to change the  
8 predetermined minimum time period.

1        24. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim  
2 19 wherein the step of confirming includes displaying by the computer  
3 system to the second employee, upon confirmation of the trade, notifications  
4 relevant to the work area function of the first shift and the training data  
5 associated with the second employee.

1        25. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim  
2 19 wherein the step of confirming includes indicating by the computer  
3 system to the first employee, upon confirmation of the trade, the  
4 confirmation of the trade.

1        26. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim  
2 19 wherein the step of confirming includes restricting by the computer  
3 system access to information about the trade of the first shift for the second  
4 shift upon confirmation of the trade.

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Please add the following new claims:

1        27. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 19 wherein the  
2        step of confirming the trade does not require approval of a management  
3        user.

1        28. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 27 wherein the  
2        step of accepting a conditional offer does not require approval of a  
3        management user.